

moderate, may be a motive strong enough, not only to maintain a rivalry with what should be the supreme motive, but absolutely to prevail over it. In each pursuit or performance in which he has excelled, or endeavoured to excel, has he not sometimes been forced to observe, with indignant grief, that his thoughts much more promptly adverted to human praise, than to divine approbation? And when he has been able in some measure to repress the passion, has he not found that a slight stimulus was competent to restore its impious ascendancy?—Now what is it that should follow from these observations? What can it be as a general inference, but plainly this, that though the desire of human applause, if it could be a calm, closely limited, and subordinate feeling, would be consistent with Christian virtue; yet, since it so mightily tends to an excess, destructive of the very essence of that virtue, it ought, (except in the cases where human estimation is sought as a mean toward some valuable end,) to be opposed and repressed in a manner NOT MUCH LESS general and unconditional than if it were purely evil? The special inference, available to the design of this essay, is, that so much of our literature as, on the contrary, tends to animate the passion with new force, is most pernicious.

These assertions are certainly in the spirit of the New Testament, which, not exacting a total extinction of the love of human applause, yet alludes to most of its operations with censure, exhibits, probably, no approved instance of its indulgence, and abounds with emphatically cogent representations, both of its pernicious influence when it predominates, and of its powerful tendency to acquire the predominance. The honest disciple of that divine school, being at the same time a self-observer, will be convinced that the degree beyond which the passion is not tolerated by the Christian law, is a degree which it will be sure to reach and to exceed in his mind in spite of the most systematical opposition. The most resolute and persevering repression will still leave so much of this passion as Christianity will pronounce a fault or a vice. He will be anxious to assemble, in aid of the repressive discipline, all the arguments of reason, all striking examples, and all the interdictions of the Bible.

Now I think I cannot be mistaken in asserting, that a